

No one chooses to be target of hatred



How many people remember when Dan Quayle said being gay is "a wrong choice that one makes?"

It has taken me a long time, but with all the debate right now (especially in the press), I've finally come around to agreeing with him. He was absolutely right. Now, of course, it's too late. He could have been our 42nd president, proudly and intelligently protecting our military from this insidious menace — the homosexual. But he's not.

I've never understood why some men (and women) choose to be gay. Sure they have a lot of fun, are more creative and often have a larger disposable income. I can see why a young lad reaching that tender age of decision might be tempted by all of those nifty attractions, but he's really not thinking things through at all.

He should realize he's going to be the victim of all kinds of vicious teasing and he's probably going to get beat up a lot. Even worse, he faces an entire lifetime of job and housing discrimination, and could be the target of venomous ballot initiatives in Oregon and Colorado, the rhetoric of which will enflame and unite homophobes everywhere. He also can never hope to be a general or an admiral or ... a president (neither can Danny boy at this point) if he were ever to come out of the closet.

No, the heartaches of being gay in this heavily prejudiced society far outweigh the joys. It's too bad that so many young lads aren't able to real-

ize this when they face the decision.

Following this same train of thought, there are a lot of bad choices one can make. I mean, why would someone choose to be black? Being black in a white society must be at least as difficult, if not more, than being gay in a straight society. If you're gay, at least you can crawl back into the closet.

Of course looking around Eugene, it's good to see not too many people decide to become black. Hey, this is a diverse college town. We make smart decisions here, like removing the seats from the park at Eighth Avenue and Monroe Street. (Most of you probably weren't here for that one, our city council wanted everyone to know that three or more African-Americans together in one place at the same time, more often than not, is probably a gang.)

Along the same line, there is another decision that about half of all people make that seems pretty shortsighted: why would anyone in their right mind decide to become a woman? Oh sure, you get to wear makeup and look pretty, have doors opened for you, cry if you feel like it, and express your true feeling to your friends. But look at the disadvantages: lower pay, glass ceilings, PMS, Bob Packwood and his kind. They must overcome all of this, not to mention being the physically weaker sex. Some choice!

After reviewing all of the above, I can't understand why we're not all (righthanded) heterosexual, white, middle-class males. Boy, I wish everyone would get it together and make the right choice.

David Strother writes a monthly column for the Emerald.

ASUO wants program modified

By Bobby Lee

The ASUO Executive is currently evaluating President Clinton's revolutionary National Service Trust Fund program that he has passionately talked about throughout his campaign and presidency. This proposal is a major change in the way federal financial aid is delivered.

The concept behind the National Service Trust Fund would allow a student to take out a loan for a college education and pay back the loan through community service, which would entail working as police officers, teachers or drug counselors. This program would also allow some high school graduates to do their volunteer work before college, in exchange for vouchers to pay for all or part of their tuition costs.

With regard to post-secondary education and access, this may be the most exciting and innovative public policy that the new Clinton administration is discussing.

Now, facing fiscal and political reality, it appears Clinton's generous rhetoric is becoming more modest. Initially, this program will only extend to thousands rather than millions of young students. According to officials familiar with Clinton's NSTF program, the President is likely to initially propose the creation of a \$2 billion to \$4 billion trust fund, which would accommodate about 100,000 volunteers.

Most of the trust fund would probably be focused toward grass-roots volunteer organizations already in place, such as Boston's City Year, an urban corps program in which volunteers ages 18 to 23 work in schools and lower-income neighborhoods. Or the fund may go to a current effort in Austin, Texas, where Chicano college students from migrant farm families work as mentors for disenfranchised Chicano high school students.

Officials who are evaluating the NSTF program concluded that the government cost for

each volunteer could run to \$20,000, including \$5,000 or more in tuition loans or vouchers. However, this amount is a drop in a bucket compared to the current administrative cost for loan and grant systems.

Some opposition includes the higher education system, which is weary because of the dramatic changes the may occur in the federal loan program. Meanwhile, police unions have advised Clinton aides they would support creating a domestic police corps to put 100,000 additional officers on the streets of U.S. cities, but they opposed allowing new college graduates to become "temporary" police officers for two years as a means of paying off a government loan.

The ASUO Executive will soon be launching a lobby effort to have student input included in the whole NSTF process before anything gets finalized. The overall intention of NSTF is admirable, but there are some concerns that I believe need to be addressed (there are 22 proposals in total that the ASUO is currently proposing).

The Trust Fund should not undermine current grant programs. In the last decade, due to the shifting balance between grants and loans, more and more needy students have been forced to take on increasingly large loan burdens to finance their education. The ASUO will lobby against this program replacing or in any way diminishing the Pell Grant.

The ASUO proposes that the Trust Fund be accompanied by a Pell Grant entitlement. In the Fiscal Year 1993 Appropriations, the maximum Pell Grant was significantly reduced to \$2,300 (from \$2,400), though, ironically, \$3,900 was authorized in the 1992 Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. The entitlement would ensure that all students who qualify for a Pell Award would receive the full amount.

ASUO recommends the NSTF be one of many loan options, which should also include some of the current loan programs

such as the Perkins Loan or the Stafford Loan. This would ensure that many students, especially non-traditional students who may not be able to participate in the NSTF, have other financial aid options.

ASUO recommends the areas currently specified as community service jobs should be expanded to include other vital community service positions such as working in battered women or rape crisis programs and community advocacy programs. Many people already provide necessary advocacy assistance through legal work counseling for different types of abuses, working to clean up the environment, and giving a voice to the under-represented.

ASUO recommends the proposed living allowance amount be determined according to local costs of a living area, dependent-care or disability-related expenses, and other social factors. The \$10,000 dollar living allowance may be enough for someone in a rural setting, but it is extremely low for those living in major urban centers. It does not take into account the needs of those with dependents or disabilities. A \$10,000 living allowance would prevent a large number of people, especially non-traditional students and students of color, from participating in the community service repayment program.

Overall, the spirit of NSTF is a powerful idea in the abstract and it does provide more opportunity for potential students in the future. However, we need to carefully watch how the political wind shifts the focus of its intention. We must continue to fight for the change Clinton has promised from the beginning.

If you are interested in seeing the rest of the proposal, please contact me in the ASUO Executive office, 346-3724. Or, if you are interested in writing your own thoughts to the Clinton administration, please write to: U.S. Capitol, Washington, D.C. 20515.

Bobby Lee is the ASUO president.

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